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RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0261
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RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 1240
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 013577

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/21/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [KISL](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: WIRANTO LAUNCHES NEW PARTY

REF: A. JAKARTA 13526 (POLITICAL GOSSIP QS 3&4)

- [1](#)B. 05 JAKARTA 12416 INDONESIAN OPPOSITION GROUP
- [1](#)C. 04 JAKARTA 6446 FEAR OF VIOLENCE FROM WIRANTO
- [1](#)D. 04 JAKARTA 3696 WIRANTO WINS GOLKAR NOMINATION

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Classified By: POLITICAL OFFICER ERIC W. KNEEDLER, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. Retired General Wiranto unveiled his new political party, the People's Conscience Party (Hanura), on December 21. Flanked by several prominent political and military personalities, the failed 2004 presidential candidate announced his new party would help serve as a vehicle for the disenfranchised, develop a new generation of leaders, enforce the rule of law and protect human rights. Despite the heavy presence of retired military figures on the party's central board, Wiranto denied that Hanura was a military party. Wiranto's announcement marked the first step in what will undoubtedly be another attempt to capture the presidency, though most analysts dismissed his prospects. End Summary.

WIRANTO'S NEW PARTY

[1](#)2. (C) Wiranto unveiled his Hanura party on December 20 and immediately announced the party's leadership structure, a veritable who's who of old order military figures. Wiranto will chair the party, while insurance businessman Yus Usman Sumanegara will serve as the party secretary-general. According to media reporting, the party's central board included: former Army Chief of Staff General Subagyo, former Naval Chief of Staff Admiral Bernard Ken Sondakh, former Army Deputy Commander General Fachrul Razi, and former military Chief of General Affairs Lieutenant General Suaidi Marasabessy. The board also included former Suharto era Finance Minister Fuad Bawazier, former Women's Affairs Minister Tuti Alawiyah, and a few actors.

[1](#)3. (C) Several high profile political personalities attended the ceremony announcing the party's creation, a group that closely resembled the senior political figures opposed to the Yudhoyono administration who have informally met in the past (Ref B). These included: former President Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), former Golkar Party Chairman Akbar Tandjung, former Vice President Try Sutrisno and former Army Chief of Staff Ryamizard Ryacudu. Following the ceremony, Gus Dur

praised Wiranto's leadership capabilities and endorsed the Hanura party's prospects in the 2009 elections.

WIRANTO REACHING FOR THE BRASS RING, BUT DOES ANYONE CARE?

14. (C) Ref A reported on Wiranto's aggressive pursuit of a vehicle for his presidential ambitions. Though Wiranto has not spoken publicly of Hanura's potential to serve as a platform for a 2009 bid, our contacts tell us he clearly believes he can use the party to become a viable candidate. One of Hanura's central board members, Suaidi Marasabessy, told us Wiranto created the party as part of a comprehensive strategy to position himself for a competitive bid for the presidency in 2009.

15. (C) When we asked noted Indonesian political activist Hariman Siregar about the new party, Hariman dismissed it as "a money laundering tool for the old order generals." The former close associate of Wiranto told us Wiranto created Hanura because he wanted to replicate SBY's success in establishing his own political party to become president. Hariman laughed off Wiranto's chances of reproducing SBY's success, sarcastically telling us that Wiranto's plan was perfect, "save for the fact that he does not enjoy SBY's popularity."

16. (C) Wiranto's party launch was not covered all that extensively by the mainstream Indonesian media, reflecting perhaps the conventional wisdom that Wiranto's best chance at the presidency has already passed.

COMMENT

17. (C) Wiranto most likely created the Hanura party to serve as a vehicle for his 2009 presidential bid after coming to

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terms with the fact that he did not have a realistic chance of running as a major party candidate. Though most of our contacts dismiss Wiranto's presidential prospects out of hand, noting his very poor showing in 2004 and widespread concerns about his human rights record, Wiranto remains a charismatic, highly recognizable political figure with deep pockets. Wiranto is nothing if not ruthlessly ambitious and calculating and given the paucity of credible presidential candidates for 2009 at this early stage, it is easy to see how he could once again emerge as a serious presidential contender.

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